



U.S. Immigration
and Customs
Enforcement

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News Release

ICE shares \$460,000 in drug assets with two Plattsburgh area police departments *Local police instrumental in helping secure border and stop drug trafficking*

PLATTSBURGH, N.Y. — Immigration and Customs Enforcement today presented checks totaling more than \$460,200 to the Plattsburgh Police Department and the Clinton County Sheriff's Department for their assistance in cracking a number of drug smuggling cases. The money is part of the proceeds seized during the investigation of illegal narcotics activity along the Canadian border north of Plattsburgh.

Resident Agent in Charge Michael Bridgeman said that the two departments have dedicated officers to the local ICE office and supported ongoing money laundering/narcotics smuggling investigations as part of a highly successful federal, local partnership.

Bridgeman said that the forfeited money comes from 2 separate drug cases that are at various stages of investigation and prosecution. One of the cases involved drug related Canadian currency being moved into the United States and the second involved U.S. currency being moved into Canada. Canadian Law Enforcement authorities also contributed to the investigations.

"Officers from local departments bring a wealth of knowledge and expertise about local illegal activity to a federal task force," Bridgeman stated. Both the Plattsburgh Police Department and the Clinton County Sheriff's office have dedicated officers to work full time with the ICE Rouses Point office

In accepting the Asset Forfeiture funds, Plattsburgh Police Chief Desmond Racicot said that the proceeds would be used to fight crime in the community and to continue assisting state and federal agencies along the border. "The City of Plattsburgh takes a dim view of those who traffic dangerous narcotics and drug money through this community, and we take great pride in supporting the local ICE office efforts because it makes our area a safer place to live," according to Chief Racicot. "Working with ICE and Homeland Security at the local level we also help stop smuggling into the interior of the country," the Chief concluded.

Clinton County Sheriff David N. Favro said, "It's every police agency's responsibility to support the Department of Homeland Security in its effort to secure our borders. By working at the local level, we can and do help stop smuggling into the interior of the United States. In fact working closely with other agencies is a key part of our department mission statement."

ICE's Asset Forfeiture Program, initiated under the Comprehensive Crime Control Act of 1984, provides funding to state and local law enforcement agencies that participate in ICE investigations that lead to seizures and forfeitures. The law allows the government to take illegal profits from crimes such as smuggling narcotics, arms, aliens, laundering illegal proceeds, and trade fraud.

Bridgeman said that the seizures allow the government to turn the table on the criminal organizations by using their own profits to enhance local enforcement efforts. "These drug smugglers are bad guys who destroy the fabric of communities all around the country and using their illegal proceeds against them is poetic justice."

Both the sheriff and the chief say that local police are dedicated to protecting their communities but also realize that drug smuggling across the Canadian border is a threat to national security and public safety in big cities and rural America alike.

Besides working with local law enforcement Bridgeman pointed out that ICE needs assistance from the general public in the border area. People can report suspicious activity by calling the DHS nationwide tip line at 1 866 DHS-2ICE. Trained law enforcement personnel answer the tip line 24 hours a day 365 days a year. Information gathered at the tip line is forwarded to ICE field offices around the nation.

ICE

U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement was established in March 2003 as the largest investigative arm of the Department of Homeland Security. ICE is comprised of four integrated divisions that form a 21st century law enforcement agency with broad responsibilities for a number of key homeland security priorities.